THE CLEVELAND
MUSEUM OF ART
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REINSTALLATION OF THE RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE COLLECTIONS

The galleries of Renaissance and Baroque art at The Cleveland Museum of Art, closed since December, 1990, will reopen to celebrate the Museum's 75th anniversary on June 7, 1991. The Museum is completing a piece-by-piece study, rearrangement, and re-labeling of more than four hundred works of art, involving a unique team of curators, educators, conservators, administrators, and consultants; renovation of four major galleries and creation of two smaller ones; and changes in nearby galleries such as the much-loved Armor Court.

All of these galleries are in the original 1916 building and have not been reinstalled since the 1970s, although many works have been added to the collection since then and scholarship about the works and their relationships has continued to evolve. Evan H. Turner, director of the Museum since 1983, sees this project as a milestone in the Museum's recent history:

> This reinstallation is one of the most important tasks undertaken during my tenure here. It comprises a *total* rethinking of the Renaissance and Baroque collections, roof-to-floor renovation of the Museum's grandest original galleries, and a de-mystifying support system of information. Even the most casual Museum-goer will feel in the presence of great works of art.

The Museum continues its practice of juxtaposing paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts from the same period. Two new *kunstkammer*--literally, "art rooms," intimate spaces modeled on a Renaissance aristocrat's study--will house small objects. These *kunstkammer*, open to view on two sides, offer visitors entering the Museum from the Fine Arts Garden through the grand south portico a feeling of space much like that of the original Museum entrance.

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The renovated galleries, stretching almost the whole length of the south side of the Museum, no longer take "schools" of art as their organizing principle--commonly followed by museums since Jacques-Louis David installed the Louvre in 1793. Instead, they are arranged to convey the beauty, quality, and internationalism of the Museum's holdings, and to capitalize on particular strengths of Cleveland's collection--among them 16th-century decorative arts, Caravaggesque paintings, and late-17th- and 18th-century Italian works--and on the scale and design of spaces provided by the Museum's original architects:

218	A Florentine Renaissance gallery including Italian and some Northern European works, ca. 1450-1530
219	16th-century Northern Italian and Caravaggesque paintings, European decorative arts, ca. 1530-1620
219A	A *kunstkammer* of 15th- and 16th-century decorative arts--a "coda" to the preceding rooms
220A	A *kunstkammer* of 17th- and 18th-century decorative arts--a "prelude" to the following rooms
220	A palatial Baroque picture gallery, juxtaposing Flemish, Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish, and French works, ca. 1620-1660
221	An international mix as in gallery 220, ca. 1680-1760

Adjacent and nearby galleries, also changed, now include:

216	Light-sensitive textiles and miniatures, ca. 1320-1540
Armor Court	Large mid-17th-century paintings and tapestries
222	European still life paintings and *trompe l'oeil* ceramics
225	Dutch 17th-century paintings

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The Cleveland reinstallation is unique in that its plan is substantially based on visitor studies and educational research that have been taking place since 1988--the most extensive campaign undertaken by any art museum to discover what its public needs and wants from it--and on an unprecedented team effort by curators, art educators, and experts from other fields. Through a Getty Focus Group Study, Museum staff were able to learn how first-time and frequent Museum visitors responded to, or reacted against, their visits to four sections of the Museum including the Renaissance galleries, and to note the visitors' views about orientation, arrangement of objects, and the need for more and different types of information. Later

observations and questions of visitors in the galleries provided strong evidence that visitors followed no consistent pattern in a gallery and often overlooked some of the most important objects.

John Schloder, the Museum's Assistant Director for Education and Public Programs and head of the reinstallation team, describes another phase of the studies:

> We introduced one variable in each gallery to study its effect on visitor behavior. A case of Venetian glass which visitors previously ignored was lit differently. We placed an introductory label next to Titian's *Adoration of the Magi*--an important work that few visitors had remembered--encouraging the visitor to study the painting, section by section. We put a sofa in front of several paintings to see if comfort would encourage visitors to study them more closely. A label placed in front of *Old Man Praying*, the most popular painting in that gallery, asked the viewer to compare it with two paintings on the opposite wall--earlier works by Rembrandt. Each variable, except the sofa, added to the appeal and holding power of the art.

In a temporary "experimental" gallery in which works of several periods, cultures, and media were exhibited, visitors responded to a variety of sample labels by completing brief questionnaires about each format and the information it offered. First-time and frequent visitors who filled out longer surveys about Museum programs were invited to be subjects in hour-long interviews about the Renaissance and Baroque galleries. Visitor studies were underwritten by a $195,000 grant from the Getty Grant Program.

Direct results of these studies are critical elements of the new installation. An information system on several levels of knowledge and interest is designed to encourage both first-time and frequent visitors to seek a personal engagement with works of art. Introductory panels describe a time period or gallery arrangement; thematic labels discuss one subject or art form, e.g., majolica, the history of portraits, or landscape traditions; large-print object labels will be flexible in format and content, instead of following a rote system unsuited to some works; and provenance, bibliographic information, accession numbers, and other routine information of little interest to most visitors will not be prominent. Recognizing that people learn from a variety of media, the reinstallation team plans audio tours or brochures for self-guided tours on such broad topics as

"music and art" and "the history of portraiture." Comfortable seating and study areas will be provided.

Evaluation of visitor responses to these reinstalled galleries will help determine the success of the team's work. Such experiments as the gallery questionnaires will continue in other areas of the Museum's collection. Lessons learned from all these studies will affect other reinstallations of the Museum's holdings over the next several years.

The Museum's conservators have used the time when works have been off view to clean and study some of the works, including an exhaustive reexamination of the Museum's Renaissance bronzes for publication in a future issue of the Bulletin.

Consultants have included staff of the arts management program at the Weatherhead School of Management of Case Western Reserve University; Howard Gardner of Project Zero at Harvard University; William Hood, professor of art and department chairman, Oberlin College; and Ross Duffin, professor of music at Case Western Reserve University. All of the studies have been funded by grants from the Getty Grant Program, which also made it possible for a full-time intern to work on the project. Other museums have expressed interest in the Cleveland Museum's work in this area as a possible example for their own renovations or revised labeling.

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For more information, photographs, or slides, please contact Denise Horstman, Public Information, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.

CONSTRUCTION FACTS

Thumbnail sketch Roof-to-floor renovation of the Museum's four grandest original galleries, construction of two small galleries, partial renovation of Armor Court and five other adjoining galleries, reinstallation of Renaissance and Baroque works.

Cross-section *Roof*--roofing and roof drains repaired or replaced; systems of light-sensing devices installed inside and out; these sensors, plus original louvers and fluorescent lighting above interior skylight, connected to a computer to maintain approximately 25-35 footcandles of ambient light in keeping with current conservation standards.

Ceilings--ionization smoke detectors installed and existing heat detectors relocated above ceiling; a combination of natural and artificial lighting, as always, now includes track lighting as in the Museum's special exhibition galleries and newest permanent galleries; original wire glass interior skylight replaced with 3-part combination of plastic-laminated Pattern 62 safety glass, conical diffusion lens, and U-V filtering plastic overlay; *kunstkammer* track lighting uses new low-voltage fixtures.

Walls--linen wall coverings replaced with fire-resistant 3/4-inch birch plywood covered with removable vinyl (as in the Museum's special exhibition galleries) painted to pick up hues in the original marble wainscoting and set off--not compete with--the artworks; plaster cornices have been elaborately painted; marble and sandstone in the *kunstkammer*, partially damaged when these spaces served as a checkroom and a restroom, have been restored.

Cases--include seven new cases, practically all glass except for the light box, base, and stainless steel rods on which shelves are suspended (i.e., no steel supports on the corners), so very little distracts from the art objects inside.

Floors--original oak parquet flooring sanded and stained to complement the walls; *kunstkammer* floors repaired using surplus 1916 parquet.

Time *Kunstkammer* construction began in September, 1990; original galleries closed from about December 10, 1990--when torn cloth wall coverings, partially stripped parquet floors, ladders, and drop cloths were the "decor" for the Museum's members' holiday party--through June 6, when members view the reinstallation for the first time. The public gets a first look during the 75th Anniversary Weekend Celebration, June 7, 8, and 9.

People *Staff*--Philip H. Dickinson, Assistant Director for Building Operations; Donald Voss, Supervisor of Building Services; nearly forty utility/art handlers, carpenters, painters, engineers, electricians, mason-plasterers, cleaners, and security staff.

Contractors & vendors--Carroll Glass & Maintenance, safety glass; Norton Industries, lens and overlay; United Technologies Carrier, computerized climate and lighting control; Edison Price Lighting; J.H. Winterich, Inc., carpenters; Fusco Sandstone; Leslie Floor Sanding; Helmut Guenschel, Inc., Glasbau Hahn ALLGLASS cases.

Architects for the 1916 building were Hubbell & Benes, Cleveland. Hays & Ruth, Cleveland, designed the 1958 addition including 2 galleries affected by these renovations.

Art Some 400 works dating from about 1320 to 1800 have been included in the reinstallation process. They range in size from the 12-foot-high painting of the *Adoration of the Magi* (Guido Reni, ca. 1640-1642) to a 1½-inch bronze medal depicting *Apollo and Marsyas* (ca. 1468, Cristoforo di Geremia?).